

‘To Hell with the Free State.’  
Remembrance of the First World War in Ireland 1924 to 1936.

Tom Burke

Introduction

In recent years, the topic of First World War memory and commemoration has been given an increasingly high profile.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps due to the onset of the war’s centenary. The study of commemoration of the First World War in Ireland began in earnest in 1986 through the work of David Fitzpatrick<sup>2</sup> and in particular Jane Leonard who produced pioneering work on the subject of commemoration in the Republic of Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Helen Robinson and Catherine Switzer offered a similar insight into First World War commemoration in Northern Ireland.<sup>4</sup> In 2000, Keith Jeffrey presented a summary of commemoration of the war in Ireland between 1919 and 1998.<sup>5</sup> Anthony Quinn’s work on how Irish barristers’ were commemorated in Ireland after the war<sup>6</sup> and Tony Canavan’s essay on the challenges Irish nationalists faced in commemorating two world wars have added insights into specific aspects of commemoration.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For studies on war and commemoration see: Ashplant, T.G; Dawson, Graham; Roper, Michael. ed. *The Politics of War and Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Quinn, T. *The Traumatic Memory of the Great War, 1914-1918, in Louis-Ferdinand Celine's Voyage Au Bout De La Nuit* (Ceredigion, Wales: The Ewin Mellen Press, 2005); Evans, Martin and Lunn, Ken. ed. *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Winter, Jay and Sivan, Emmanuel. ed. *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Hunt, Michael. *Memory. War and Trauma* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Pennell, Catriona. "Popular History and Myth-Making: The Role and Responsibility of First World War Historians in the Centenary Commemorations 2014-2018," *Historically Speaking* 13, no. 5 (5 November, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Fitzpatrick, David. *Ireland and the First World War*. (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986). For further Fitzpatrick publications on commemoration see. Fitzpatrick, David. "Commemoration in the Irish Free State: A Chronicle of Embarrassment," in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Pp.184-203. Fitzpatrick, David. "Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts, 1912-1923," in *Towards Commemoration*, ed. John Horne and Edward Madigan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, Jane. "Facing 'the Finger of Scorn': Veterans' Memories of Ireland after the Great War," in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Geoff Eley (Oxford: Berg, 1997). Pp.59-72. See also Leonard, Jane. "The Twinge of Memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919," in *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture*, ed. Richard English and Graham Walker (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996). Pp.99-115. See also Leonard, Jane. *The Culture of War Commemoration* (Dublin: Cultures of Ireland, 1996). Horne, John. *Our War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008). See chapter titled Survivors. Pp. 209-223.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, Helen. "Remembering War in the Midst of Conflict: First World War Commemorations in the Northern Irish Troubles," *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 1 (2010). Pp.80-101. See also Switzer, Catherine. *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See specifically Chapter 4 in this book titled *Commemoration: Turning the 11<sup>th</sup> November into 12<sup>th</sup> July*.

<sup>6</sup> Quinn, Anthony. *Wigs and Guns: Irish Barristers of the Great War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006). See specifically chapter titled Prologue 3.

<sup>7</sup> Canavan, Tony. "The Poppy My Father Wore: The Problems Facing Irish Nationalists in Commemorating the Two World Wars," in *Commemorating Ireland-History, Politics, Culture*, ed. Eberhard Bort (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004). Pp.56-68.

With an eye on the centenary of commemorations in Ireland, *Towards Commemoration* edited by John Horne and Edward Madigan features essays by historians, journalists and civic activists debating and suggesting ideas on how to make the most, and avoid the worst, of the centenary decade.<sup>8</sup> Jason Myers excellent book published in 2013 brings research on remembrance and commemoration of the First World War in Ireland up to date.<sup>9</sup>

Much of this admirable work offers an overview of First World War commemoration in Ireland between 1919 and 2013.<sup>10</sup> However, using relatively unused primary source material from Department of Justice files at the National Archives in Dublin, this this essay focuses on First World War commemoration specifically between the politically volatile years of 1924 and 1938 in the Irish Free State, mainly in Dublin.<sup>11</sup> Caught in the middle of opposing ideology and often physical threats, it presents the challenges and response the Irish Free State government experienced on a yearly basis during that period from groups within the state who, on one side supported and organised remembrance events such as the Royal British Legion (RBL), and on the opposite side, anti-treaty republicans, who, although not denying citizens the occasion and space to remember their relatives who suffered and died in the First World War, viewed remembrance events with scepticism and scorn particularly towards the RBL. The response to these challenges experienced at government level by both the Cosgrave and De Valera administrations reveal an interesting insight into Irish government's thinking on the subject of remembrance and commemoration during a period of strained Anglo-Irish relations.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Horne, John and Madigan, Edward. ed. *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912-1923* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Myers, Jason. *The Great War and Memory in Irish Culture 1918-2010* (Palo Alto, California: Academica Press, LLC, 2013). Although this book provides an excellent account of remembrance and commemoration of the First World War in Ireland between the years 1918 to 2010, Myers failed to acknowledge or even refer to the major contribution in creating an awareness in Irish society of the First World War by history societies such as The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, The Royal Munster Fusiliers Association, The Connaught Rangers Association and other similar societies whose activities included the presentation of public lectures, exhibitions and in the case of the RDFA, a new First World War archive at Dublin City Library and Archive in Pearse Street, Dublin.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 2 in Jason Myers book examines commemoration events such as the contentious issue parades and poppy selling throughout Ireland between 1919 and 1939. However, the bulk of his sources for this chapter are from Irish newspapers. The only primary source he used from The National Archives of Ireland are documents from Department of the Taoiseach, Armistice Day and Remembrance Commemorations. File reference DT.S3370B.

<sup>11</sup> An edited version of his essay was published in: Burke, Tom. "Contentious Parades and Remembrance Days in Dublin 1928-1936," *The Blue Cap, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association* 11, (2004).Pp.6-17.

<sup>12</sup> Contributing to the strain in Anglo-Irish relations were for example the Boundary Commission of November 1925 and the 'Ultimate Financial Agreement' between the Free State and Britain in 1927. See Collins, M E. *An Outline of Modern Irish History 1850-1966* (Dublin: The Educational Company, 1974).p.343. Moreover, attempts by successive Irish Ministers for External Affairs to develop Ireland's independence by stripping the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty back to its basic articles put a strain on Anglo-Irish relation. See Fanning, Ronan; Kennedy,

This essay also outlines the response of the RBL in Dublin to the changing political climate in Ireland between the years of 1924 and 1938 and how it grew to accept, in some cases reluctantly, that while their activities were not denied such as the selling of poppies and contentious militaristic parades, remembrance activities were politically toned down in order to reflect the changing political climate, and, in terms of future activities, offer a constructive role within the new Irish state.

The Great War ended on 11 November 1918 and in the immediate years after the war remembrance services were held throughout the length and breadth of Ireland on the weekend preceding the 11 November. On the mornings of Remembrance Sunday in Dublin, hundreds of British forces ex-service men would proudly parade to Mass in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral and in the afternoon to St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the early nineteen twenties, thousands of people would gather at College Green over remembrance weekend around a temporary Cenotaph erected outside Trinity College. The Irish Cenotaph was first erected for the remembrance services in Dublin in November 1924. It consisted of a wooden Celtic cross known as the Ginchy Cross. The Cross was approximately four meters high and was made from Elm timbers that came from a ruined French farmhouse on the Somme front. Prior to it being brought back to Ireland, it was erected between the Somme battlefield villages of Ginchy and Guillemont. The Cross was built by men from the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment who were the Pioneer Battalion of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division during their part in the Battle of the Somme in September 1916.

In late August 1926, an Irish delegation travelled to France and Belgium for an unveiling ceremony of two new Irish granite Celtic crosses. Both crosses were built in Ireland and shipped from Dublin to their sites on the continent. On Saturday the 21 August 1926, the first cross unveiled was the one erected facing the Bois De Wijtschate in memory of the Irishmen who died taking the village of Wijtschate in June 1917. Present at the ceremony were General Sir William Hickie, ex-G.O.C 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, General Sir Bryan Mahon who commanded the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in Gallipoli, Alfie Byrne T.D., the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Count O' Kelly, the Irish Free State Representative in Brussels, Sir George Graham, the British Ambassador to Belgium and the Abbess of the convent at Loker which was the village in which General Hickie had his divisional headquarters prior to the attack on Wijtschate on 7 June 1917.

---

Michael;Keogh,Dermot;O' Halpin,Eunan. ed. *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy,Volume 3: 1926-1932* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2002).

Next day, the party travelled on to Guillemont in France and on 23 August 1926 the other Irish granite Celtic Cross was unveiled there. The French military commander, Marshall Joffre, attended this ceremony. Over the small roads leading into the village of Guillemont were banners which read 'Vive l'Irlande', while around the site of the Cross itself, paper shamrocks and green paper bunting were intermingled with Union Jacks and brand new French tri-colours<sup>13</sup> Today, the timber Ginchy Cross stands in the north-east room in the Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin. Up to 1925, different venues such as College Green and St. Stephen's Green had been used in the city to hold the Saturday wreath laying ceremony at the Irish cenotaph where the Ginchy Cross was erected. In 1926, the ceremony finally moved to the Phoenix Park where it took place beside the Duke of Wellington monument. The Sunday religious ceremonies carried on as usual. Symbolically, the remembrance commemorations had moved from the centre of focus to the outskirts of Dublin city.

For many years after the ending of the Great War, particularly up to the mid-nineteen thirties, the remembrance services in Dublin were set amidst a volatile political atmosphere that dangerously hung over Dublin and indeed the rest of the country. In November of 1926, the Irish Minister for Home Affairs (later called Justice); Mr Kevin O'Higgins laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in London. On 10 July the following year, while walking alone from his home to a noon Mass at the parish church in Booterstown, Co. Dublin, O'Higgins was murdered by anti-treaty IRA gunmen.<sup>14</sup> On Saturday afternoon the 5 November 1927, a new British Legion Hall was opened at Inchicore on the south side of Dublin. It was built for members of the Legion who were veterans of the Great War and who were employed in the Great Southern Railway works at Inchicore. Membership was approximately 200. Colours to the railway ex-service men were presented at Pond Park in Inchicore where the Hall was built. At the opening of the Hall, Major J.J. Tynan, Chief Officer of the British Legion in Dublin, told the gathering about the Legion and its work in Dublin. According to *The Irish Times*, the British Legion:<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> "The Irish Times." and "The Irish Independent." 25 August 1926.

<sup>14</sup> McCarthy, John P. *Kevin O' Higgins Builder of the Irish State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).p.387. For a more detailed account of this assassination, see McCarthy Pp.287-292.O'Higgins had a family connection with the First World War. Two of his older brothers served in the British forces during the war: Jack, a doctor, was a surgeon in the Navy and Michael, died in Flanders. See McCarthy p.4.

<sup>15</sup> "The Irish Times." 7 November 1927.

Were non sectarian and non-political. Their main objective was to do everything they possibly could for the men who fought in the Great War and the dependants of those who fell. There were many ex-Service men in Southern Ireland and their lot was not easy on account of the tremendous amount of unemployment. Every man that left Ireland was a volunteer and that was a thing they should all be proud of.

The next morning on Sunday 6 November, a special Memorial Mass was held in the Pro-Cathedral in Marlborough Street at 11:00 a.m. An hour earlier, the veterans had assembled in Molesworth Street and led by the band of the British Legion and 'Ireland's Own Band', they paraded through Dublin with their standards to Mass at the Pro-Cathedral. At least 2,000 men filled the Cathedral wearing their medals. About a dozen members of the British Fascist (Black Shirts) movement with their banner also attended the Mass. After the Mass, the men paraded back to Molesworth Street. Watched by the people of Dublin, they marched in lines of military formation over O'Connell Bridge and into the fashionable shopping streets of Dublin. On they marched with their medals showing along Westmoreland Street, College Green and Nassau Street, Dawson Street and into Molesworth Street, where outside the headquarters of the RBL, the different units dispersed. At that time, the headquarters of the Legion in Dublin were at No. 27 Molesworth Street which is next door to Buswell's Hotel. During the First World War, the building was used as a convalescent home for officers. Molesworth Street runs perpendicular to Kildare Street and Dail Eireann stands at the intersection of the two streets. The sight of hundreds of ex-Service men lining up in front of Dail Eireann each November must certainly have raised a few eyebrows in the Irish chamber. Later on in November, the British Legion moved to No. 23 Harcourt Street.

Remembrance Services were held in most of the Protestant churches around Dublin, the largest service being in St. Patrick's Cathedral. There was only one Catholic Church reported by *The Irish Times* as having held a remembrance service and that was the Pro-Cathedral.

This indeed was another revealing sign of the times in view of the fact that the majority of those who served and died in the Great War from Dublin were Roman Catholic.<sup>16</sup> For Catholic ex-Service men and women in 1927, Remembrance Day had by then become sectarianised, a point which General Hickie had come to realise. Addressing a British Legion meeting in Athy Co. Kildare on the 22 September 1926, Hickie stated that he did not want to see, 'the eleventh of November being turned into the twelfth of July.'<sup>17</sup> The sectarianising and politicising of the Remembrance Services was a tragedy, not of the majority of ex-Service men's making, but of a society in which religion and politics were painful and divisive issues. Perhaps due to its Anglo-centric ethos, reporting of the Mass in *The Irish Times* was minimal compared to the coverage given to the Services in the two Dublin Protestant Cathedrals. Despite this however, throughout the Irish Free State in major towns such as Sligo, Carrick-on-Shannon, Limerick, Tullamore, Athlone, Drogheda and Waterford, Catholic ex-Service men attended Masses on remembrance weekends in memory of their fallen comrades. However, *The* service of remembrance to attend was the Sunday service at St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Dublin.<sup>18</sup>

On the afternoon of Sunday the 6 November 1927 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, a British Legion Band led the parade and Legion standards were carried into the Cathedral. General Sir Hubert Gough, a leading participant in the Curragh incident of March 1914 and who once commanded the British Fifth Army in France during the war, was due to attend but could not make it so Earl Haig nominated Colonel John Brown C.B, Vice President of the Legion to be his representative at the service. The service was attended by an array of interesting people; the nobility of Dublin would best describe them. Because of over-crowding many of the veterans did not gain entry to the Service and some were left standing round the aisle. Allegedly, some were even locked out when the doors of the Cathedral closed for the service. The Legion stewards later denied this had happened.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Callan, P. *Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland during the First World War*. Irish Sword XVII. 1987. Pp. 53.

<sup>17</sup> "The Irish Times." 23 September 1926.

<sup>18</sup> Today, the same service is run by the Royal British Legion, Republic of Ireland Branch. Attended by the President of Ireland it is now called the 'Service of Remembrance and Reconciliation.'

<sup>19</sup> "The Irish Times." 7 and 8 November 1927.

In attendance were the Chairman of the Port and Docks Board (Mr T .R. Mc Cullagh), the President of the Chamber of Commerce (Mr J.C.M. Eason O.B.E), Sir William Taylor, C.B: Sir John Lumsden, K.C.B, Chairman Joint Committee British Red Cross and Order of St. John: the President of the Royal Irish Academy (Mr R. A.S Macalister Litt.D., L.LD), Vice- President of the Royal College of Surgeons, (Dr. Bethal Solomons). The Dublin Fusiliers friend, Lady Arnott, who became a Dame of the British Empire, also attended. The event took on a diplomatic nature with the attendance of various consular representatives from France, America and Belgium. The service had also taken on a very British tone. The Preacher, Rev E.H.F Campbell MA, Vicar of All Saints Grangegorman, gave a very patriotic sermon evoking the heroism of the gallant 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Divisions which left, ‘the shelter and security of this island home of ours and offered life itself as a sign of their greater love: and our moral perception will have gone fatally wrong if we ever ceased to hold them in remembrance.’

The sermon concluded with the singing of ‘God Save the King.’<sup>20</sup> In a protest demonstration against the remembrance services in Dublin with its displays of British militarism, on Tuesday night, 8 November 1927, a large gathering answered the call of the Fianna Fail Party to a meeting in College Green, Dublin. The meeting was to demonstrate, ‘the protest of the Nationalist people of Dublin against the repetition of displays of British Imperialist sentiment that are insulting to the Irish people.’ The speakers included prominent Fianna Fail members of Dail Eireann. They were Mr Sean Lemass, T.D, Mr Frank Fahey, T.D, Mr Oscar Traynor, ex-T.D and Mr Eamon De Valera, T.D. All speakers protested about the carrying of the Union Jack by ex-Service men in Remembrance Day parades. It was, they claimed, an insult to the Irish sentiment and should be stopped. *The Irish Times* reported:<sup>21</sup>

Mr Sean Lemass T.D said that on previous occasions, when demonstrations were arranged in memory of men who died in France, the demonstrations were utilised by a small section to display Imperialistic sentiments that, in view of the history of this country, and in particular of Dublin, could not be peaceably tolerated by the Irish people (*Hear, hear*).

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 7 November 1927. The singing of *God Save the King* at public events in Dublin was not uncommon. It was sung at the Dublin Horse Show in the mid-1920s. See Sherry, Ruth. "The Uses of the National Anthem," in *Ireland: Towards New Identities ?*, ed. Karl-Heinz Westrap and Michael Boss(Aarhus,Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1998).p.42.

<sup>21</sup> "The Irish Times." 9 November 1927.

On those occasions the flag that had forever been the symbol of tyranny, rapine and loot in Ireland was flaunted. A small section availed itself of the occasion to offer that insult to the Irish people, and, as inevitably happened when such insults were offered to a high spirited people, they resulted in rioting and disorder in the capital. They did not wish to see a renewal of riot or disorder in Dublin. They had no objection to any section of the people honouring their dead but they did object to the alien section in their midst, whose headquarters were situated in the building opposite (pointing to Trinity College) availing itself of these occasions. He believed that the vast majority of the British ex-Service men themselves objected to the demonstrations being used for such purpose, and the main purpose of this meeting was to ask the Nationalist ex-Service men to see that the demonstration on Friday next was not utilised, as previous demonstrations had been, to insult the citizens of Dublin.

These were reasonable sentiments expressed by Mr. Lemass, who after all lost two of his distant cousins in the war serving in the British Army, one of whom was a Dublin Fusilier. Another speaker, Mr. Frank Fahey, T.D expressed similar sentiments to those of Mr. Lemass and added that. ‘ He had no quarrel with those who would commemorate their dead, who honestly died believing they were right; but that commemoration should not be used by pro-Britishers to spread the Union Jack over Dublin and to say that the remnant of the ex-Service men in Ireland were pro-British. They were not.’ Mr. T. Mullins T.D. said that, ‘a section had used Remembrance Day as a demonstration in this country of the solidity of British Imperialism.’ Mr Eamon De Valera, who was at the time, Chancellor of the National University also spoke: <sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



Nothing was more natural than that men should seek to commemorate the memory of comrades who fought by their side in battle. That was generous sentiment, and nothing was meaner than to take advantage of that sentiment and use it for a base end. They understood that sentiment and respected it and nobody present would do anything at variance with an understanding of that sentiment... The young men who went out to France and Flanders from 1914 to 1918 went because the Nationalist leaders of the time asked them to go as being the best way to secure freedom for this country. It was to those men - to the rank and file - that they appealed to see to it that the commemorations would not be used by *Britishers* to plant their flag here. There were two points he wished to make. One, that the misuse of this celebration could be stopped by the rank and file, and two, it could be stopped by the citizens making it quite clear that they would not tolerate its continuance.

Despite Mr. Lemass being, ‘no stranger to criticising remembrance ceremonies’<sup>23</sup>, there was a conciliatory tone running through the speeches made by Mr. Lemass and Mr. De Valera outside Trinity College that night. It is important to understand what these men were saying and where they were coming from politically. They had fought for Irish independence and indeed had won it. They had respect and an understanding for their fellow countrymen who joined Kitchener’s armies. There was, as Mr. De Valera stated, ‘nothing more natural’ than those men remembering their dead. However in 1927, Ireland was a fledgling democracy emerging from a bitter civil war full of political uncertainties. A senior minister in the Dail, Mr. Kevin O’Higgins, had been murdered and the nation had voted in two general elections, one in June and the other in September of that year. Fianna Fail had entered the Dail for the first time. The sight of thousands of men marching through the city of Dublin in November each year in military formation and command, some of them waving the very flag Mr. Lemass and Mr. De Valera had fought so hard to be rid of, was, for De Valera and company, unacceptable. There was a consistency of attitude towards Irish veterans of the First World War amongst some of the speakers that night in 1927. In 1966, Mr. Sean Lemass as Taoiseach stated:<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey’s. *Ireland and The Great War*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999. p.135.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey.p.135.

In later years it was common - and I was guilty in this respect - to question the motives of those men who joined the new British armies formed at the outbreak of the war, but it must be in their honour and in fairness to their memory be said that they were motivated by the highest purpose.

There is no doubt, that remembrance ceremonies in 1927 and surrounding years were used by 'Britishers' as Mr. De Valera called them, to express their existence in this new and emerging Irish Free State. They hadn't gone away. The sight of veterans standing in the pews of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday bore simple testimony to that. There may have been one or two individuals at College Green who misunderstood what Mr. Lemass and Mr. De Valera had said on that Tuesday night because two days later, only five days after it had been officially opened, the British Legion Hall at Inchicore was burned down in the early hours of Thursday morning on 10 November 1927. Newspaper reports stated that the Police had found three empty petrol tins each capable of holding two gallons of petrol amongst the ruins. The Hall was gutted since it was mainly constructed from wood. It had been erected on private ground given by the Great Southern Railway Company.<sup>25</sup> The caretaker of the new hall was a Boer War Veteran named Mr. Hugh Waldron who lived at No. 41, James's Street, Dublin. The destruction of this meeting place for veterans was a bitter pill for Mr. Waldron in particular to swallow. The Great War had taken the lives of two of his sons, Paddy and Thomas. Paddy had originally served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was killed on 27 May 1918 while serving with the 7<sup>th</sup> (South Irish Horse) Royal Irish Regiment. He is buried in Aire Communal Cemetery sixteen kilometres south east of the French town of St. Omer. About four months after Paddy died, his brother Thomas died of wounds on the 24 September 1918 at the age twenty-two. Thomas served with the 21<sup>st</sup> Highland Light Infantry and died at home. He was buried in St. James's Church of Ireland Churchyard in Kilmainham and his name is on the Grangegorman Memorial in Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin.<sup>26</sup> Two years later, the hall was rebuilt on the same site, this time out of concrete. Just as it was nearly complete, on Friday the 8 November 1929, the roof was blown off and a dividing wall blown in.

---

<sup>25</sup> "The Irish Times," 11 November 1927.

<sup>26</sup> "[Http://www.Cwgc.Org](http://www.cwgc.org) the Commonwealth War Graves Commission", The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (2013).

The explosion was allegedly heard all over Inchicore.<sup>27</sup> According to Garda intelligence, this particular act of terror appeared, 'to have been an unofficial job'. What 'unofficial' means is anybody's guess, possible renegade republicans?<sup>28</sup>

The annual military style remembrance parades organised by the RBL in Dublin and throughout the Irish Free State became a contentious and sensitive issue both for the Government and the Gardai. Each year, the remembrance parade presented several major issues such as civil disorder in the week leading up to 11 November and further disorder arising from counter demonstrations and rival factions fighting before and after parades had passed through Dublin. The appearance of British Fascists in the parade may also have been a concern.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from the street violence which occurred during the Armistice period, a more serious worry presented itself to the Dublin Metropolitan Police and that was the indiscriminate use of explosives throughout the city by the republicans. At 05:00 a.m. on 11 November 1928, the IRA blew up the statue of King William of Orange in College Green. Windows in the immediate vicinity were blown in and no arrests were made. At exactly the same time on the same day, the monument in Herbert Park erected to commemorate the visit of King George V in 1911 was completely destroyed. Again at the same time and date, an attempt was made to blow up a monument to King George II in St. Stephen's Green.<sup>30</sup> In Limerick, the hall used by the Sarsfield Fife and Drum band in Mungret Street was broken into. The floor was torn up and the band's drums were destroyed. The members of the band, who were for most part Irish veterans of the Great War, had received threatening letters warning them not to take part in the Remembrance parade. In defiance of this threat, the men borrowed a set of drums and took part in the ceremony in Limerick.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "The Irish Times." 9 November 1929.

<sup>28</sup> "The National Archives," (Dublin). File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to Secretary Dept of Defence. 9 November 1929.

<sup>29</sup> "The Irish Times." 8 April 1929. In 1929, there was an Irish Free State Command of the British fascist movement. Members of this Irish fascist movement had friendly relationships with senior members of the Royal British Legion in Dublin such as area Chairman of the Royal British Legion in Dublin, Mr. A. P. Connolly and Major Tynan DSO. Members of both movements attended each other's social and public events.

<sup>30</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Report By Supt. Neligan on outrages carried out in November 1928.

<sup>31</sup> "The Irish Independent." 7 November 1927.

Police intelligence had prior knowledge of many of the ‘outrages’ that the IRA had planned over the Armistice period in 1928. For example, they knew that the IRA was planning poppy raids throughout the Free State and that the headquarters for the sale and distribution of poppies at No. 23 Suffolk Street in Dublin was going to be raided. Another poppy depot was at No. 2 Dawson Street.<sup>32</sup> They also knew that the Capital Cinema in Dublin was going to be raided simply because the cinema was showing a war picture titled ‘Verdun.’ They knew about a proposed IRA raid on a Bank in Inchicore. Interestingly they also knew that the new War Memorial at Trinity College was going to be attacked and that the statue of King William was going to take flight as well. Because of their intelligence network, many of these outrages were prevented. The blowing up of ‘King Billy’ was the only slip up the Gardai made. The statue was guarded by two detectives who left their post at 04:30 a.m. to ‘convey an abandoned motor car found in Dame Street to the Detective Office’. While they were away, the statue of King William was blown up. Chief Superintendent David Neligan was not impressed with these two men leaving their post and noted in his report to the Garda Commissioner that, ‘disciplinary action is being taken against these two men for leaving their post.’<sup>33</sup>

Another main issue of concern to the Gardai and Government was the military nature of the Armistice parades. As well as the threat of civil disorder, the parades presented a dilemma which had a certain amount of political baggage attached. The gun had not departed from Irish politics and consequently the Government was obliged to watch over its shoulder for what they termed the ‘Irregulars’, i.e. the IRA. One of these ‘Irregular’ persons, Mr. George Mooney, was caught in possession of a land mine and a fully loaded .45 revolver. The parades dilemma which yearly confronted the Irish Government was, that if the British Legion could march in military formation through the cities and towns of the Irish Free State each November, why couldn’t the ‘Irregulars’ parade when they chose to do so in a similar manner. On this particular issue, Garda Chief Superintendent Neligan, stated in a report to the Garda Commissioner Eoin O’Duffy that:

34

---

<sup>32</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Report By Supt. Neligan on outrages carried out in November 1928.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Letter from Chief Superintendent Neligan to Garda Commissioner. 7 November 1928.

This 'Commemoration' is becoming the excuse for a regular military field day for these persons. I direct your attention to the formation of companies under persons calling themselves Captain and Majors, and, the companies are going to march in Military formation. I think the attached programme gives these men far too much scope and certainly if the Irregulars adopted these tactics, they would be arrested under the Treasonable Offences Act 1925. The position this year is far worse than other years because they are being allowed far more latitude than formerly.

Attached to Chief Superintendent Neligan's letter to the Commissioner was a paper cutting from an *Irish Times* report on a recent remembrance parade in Dublin. To illustrate his point, Superintendent Neligan had underlined in the report the words, '*formation and order of parade*', '*columns of four*'. '*Major W. Nolan*', '*companies of 200 strong.*' In his report to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, dated the 8 November 1928, the Commissioner agreed with his Superintendent's assessment of the parades.<sup>35</sup>

I agree with Col. Neligan...This is intended much more as military display than a bona fide commemoration service for the dead to which there can be no objection, though there appears no necessity to perpetuate this form of ceremony in the Saorstát. If we allow this military display in Dublin, we cannot very well object to similar displays elsewhere on the occasion. I am aware that in certain quarters these activists are looked upon as provocative, particularly in view of the fact, that similar activities are prohibited and punished by imprisonment if indulged in by other organisations.

Were I in a position to do so, I would very definitely prohibit all military activities, other than by the recognised forces of the State. No section would have a grievance and the work of the Police would be easier.

I suggest, that the Secretary of the British Legion here be very definitely informed that the parade is to take the form of a procession and that no recognised military words of commands will be allowed.

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. Letter from Garda Commissioner to Secretary Dept. of Justice. 8 November 1928.

I attach a cutting from 'The Independent' of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant, showing British Fascisti marching in uniform. I consider this should not be allowed.

On Armistice Day 1928, the uses of military commands at a British Legion remembrance parade in Ennis, Co. Clare almost lead to fisticuffs on the morning of the parade. A parade of about 100 ex-Service men formed up at the Legion Headquarters in Ennis from where they marched to the Franciscan Church to attend Mass. Orders of 'Stand at Ease' and 'Form Fours' were issued by a Sergeant Major. The officer in charge of the parade was Major George Studdert. The Garda Chief Superintendent in Ennis, Edward O'Duffy, heard about this parade and the military orders that were given. He immediately sent a Garda Sergeant to advise Major Studdert to 'refrain from issuing unnecessary military commands and movements.' Major Studdert ignored the request made by the Garda Sergeant and after Mass ordered his men to form up. He then marched them off to the Town Square where they held a two minute silence.

After the two minute silence, the ex-Service men were preparing to march off when Chief Superintendent O'Duffy and another detective officer approached Major Studdert who issued the command, 'Parade Halt' and 'Stand at Ease.' Supt. O'Duffy informed the Major that he had 'glaringly infringed the Treason Regulations' and he, the Garda, contended he 'was justified in his action'. He explained to the Major that his actions were likely to provoke a breach of the peace and that he would have to dismiss the parade, which he did after some wrangling. During the time Chief Superintendent O'Duffy was remonstrating with the Major and another officer named Bukeridge, a Protestant Clergyman, the Rev. Griffen, approached the Gardai excitedly and shouted, 'To Hell with the Free State.' In his report on this particular incident, Chief Superintendent O'Duffy noted, with what can only be described as diplomacy that, 'there was no reply to the Reverend gentleman's vulgar insult to the State which affords him full protection and respect.'

O'Duffy concluded in his report that this particular Armistice parade was a:<sup>36</sup>

Definite Imperialist display and not a commemoration of the War dead as it ought to have been...The continuance of exhibitions of this kind which are hateful in the eyes of nine tenths of the people, will undoubtedly court trouble. It is not suggested that any action should be taken against the men concerned on this occasion, but I respectively beg to renew my recommendation to have permission for such displays refused in future years.

In the same year in Dublin i.e. November 1928, the outward and return Remembrance parade along the northern quays to and from the Phoenix Park, took place without much incident. Approximately 20,000 ex-Servicemen paraded to the park where they were joined by 10,000 on-lookers who were mainly relatives of the men who marched or indeed relatives of men who died in the war. According to the Garda Commissioner's report to the Dept of Justice, 'the parade was carried out in an orderly manner.' However from 5:00 p.m. onwards, there were 'some minor scuffles between rival parties of ex-Servicemen and groups of young men wearing Easter Lilies.' The Commissioner's report also referred to the parade in Cork City in which about 2,000 ex-Servicemen 'assembled at the South Mall and marched to the Cenotaph in the same street where a two minute silence was observed and Last Post sounded.' In county Cork, there were parades in, 'Cobh, Mallow, Kanturk, Fermoy, Bandon and Skibbereen. In all cases, they were conducted in an orderly manner and in no case was there anything in the nature of a military display. There was neither counter demonstrations nor any breach of the peace in the areas listed. Parades by ex-Servicemen also took place in Carrick-on-Shannon, Wexford, Kilkenny and Tralee, all of which were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. The bit of anger shown by Reverend Griffin in Ennis was the only incident of this nature which according to the Commissioner's report, 'called for special attention.'<sup>37</sup> It would therefore seem that civil disturbances at and militarisation of remembrance parades was not the norm throughout the Irish Free State.

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Report from. Chief Superintended Edward O'Duffy, Garda Office, Ennis, Co. Clare to the Garda Commissioner. 12 November 1928.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* Report from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice on Armistice Day Celebrations held in November 1928. 21 November 1928.

In 1929, attendance figures at the annual Armistice parade to the Phoenix Park had dropped off slightly from the previous years. The Gardai estimated a crowd of 9,000 people witnessed the ceremony. No Garda figures were given for the number of ex-Servicemen on parade, but, *The Irish Times* quoted a figure of over 10,000.<sup>38</sup> One possible reason for this fall off in attendance was a fear of been attacked or intimidated by ‘young men wearing Easter Lilies’.<sup>39</sup> According to Garda intelligence, ‘Poppy day was a period when Irregulars were active.’ Things got so bad that year that Government Minister’s escorts were told to take special precautions during the remembrance period and the Military at Collins Barracks and Portobello Barracks as well as Baldonnell Aerodrome were put on full alert.<sup>40</sup>

Each year, the issues of the parades and the sale of poppies were put on the long finger and forgotten by the Government until early November when the same worries of public disorder and the threat of outrages carried out by Irregulars cropped up. As far as Republicans were concerned, what really upset them was, not so much the ex-Servicemen remembering their dead, but the flying of the Union Jack flag from some buildings in Dublin around the Armistice period and the carrying of Union Jacks by some ex-Servicemen in Remembrance parades through the city. Like the poppy sellers, anyone selling Union Jacks in Dublin became the focus of IRA attention. Mr. Charles Morrissey sold Union Jacks in his second hand bookshop at No. 28 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin. One day in November 1930, his shop was raided by seven men, one of whom was armed. One of the raiders asked Mr. Morrissey, ‘if he had any Greek books for sale.’ While Mr. Morrissey was looking for the books another one of the raiders said. ‘Hand up those flags’, meaning the Union Jacks, which were on sale. Morrissey refused to do so. The man with the gun, a .45 revolver, pressed the gun into Mr. Morrissey’s side and hit him in the face with his fist. Mrs. Morrissey, who was in the shop at the time, screamed for help and she too was assaulted. Mrs. Morrissey’s two nieces were outside and ran into the shop screaming.

---

<sup>38</sup> "The Irish Times." 12 November 1929.

<sup>39</sup> Easter Lilies were worn by republican sympathisers in remembrance of the Easter Rising of 1916.

<sup>40</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to Secretary Dept. of Defence . 9 November 1929.



It appears that all this screaming and pandemonium was too much for the Republican Greek scholars who scampered from the shop and jumped on a passing tram taking with them two Union Jacks that were about three foot square and worth fifteen shillings.<sup>41</sup>

In 1932, a public rally in College Green on the eve of Armistice Day was organised by a group calling themselves, 'The League Against Imperialism'. Addressing a crowd of about 15,000 people, one speaker on the platform, Mr. C. Lehane, who first spoke in Irish, told the gathering, 'We issue a solemn warning that wherever the Flag of England flies in Dublin, it will not fly safely.' At the meeting a Union Jack was burned. In her address to the crowd, Mrs. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington stated, 'They [ The League Against Imperialism ] grudged no honour to the dead who believed they fought for a good cause, even though they were dupes, but they objected to the dead being used to carry on the traditions of imperialism.'<sup>42</sup> The meeting was advertised in 'An Phoblacht' on the 5 November 1932. Other speakers that night were Peadar O'Donnell, Sean Mc Bride, Frank Ryan, Maude Gonne-Mac Bride, Mrs. Connolly-O'Brien and an Indian citizen named Mr. L.R. Yajniska.

Aspects of the speech made by Peadar O'Donnell brought particular attention to the Gardai. He actually warned them to stay away from any fights that might erupt between what he called 'Cosgravians', a term he used to describe supporters of the Cumann na nGaedheal party leader William Cosgrave, and 'angry Irish men' (In February 1932, William Cosgrave lost power in a General Election to the De Valera led Fianna Fail party. The later entered government with the support of seven Labour deputies.) O'Donnell stated that, 'the Policeman who puts his head between the Cosgravians and angry Irishmen might as well leave his head at home.'<sup>43</sup> This was a direct threat to the new Fianna Fail government.

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. File reference. JUS8/64. Garda report of incident titled, 'Robbery with Arms-Green Street.' 11 November 1930.

<sup>42</sup> "The Irish Independent." 11 November 1932.

<sup>43</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Statement by Gardai on duty at meeting in College Green.

That night, trouble broke out in the streets of Dublin city. The meeting concluded and the following resolution was passed: <sup>44</sup>

That this mass meeting of the citizens of Dublin pledge our determination to resist Imperialism by every means in our power. And we call upon the Government not to make any settlement with Britain until the complete Independence of Ireland is achieved.

From the above resolution it would seem that some republicans were equally as guilty as the so called imperialists in using the remembrance period to voice and advance their political objectives despite the sentiments of Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington and others. The middle ground of conciliation got lost on both sides.

As far as the police were concerned, in order to prevent any future civil disorder in the city around the Armistice weekend, in their belief, by removing the red flag from the Bull, i.e. the Union Jacks from the republicans, hopefully then the reason for republican discontent and hence their reason for creating trouble would also be removed. The responsibility for maintaining law and order on the streets of Dublin lay with the Dublin Metropolitan Police. When disorder broke out during the Armistice commemorations, despite Peadar O'Donnell's threats, their men were in the middle. Therefore, in order to prevent any civil disorder arising from future Armistice parades, the Garda Commissioner, Eoin O'Duffy, presented a discussion paper to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, in which O'Duffy broadly outlined the problems the Armistice commemorations created in the city each year and, more importantly, he presented a set of recommendations for the peaceful running of future Armistice ceremonies in Dublin and elsewhere in the Irish Free State. O'Duffy titled his paper, '*Sale of Flanders Poppies and Armistice Parades*'. The paper was dated the 21 September 1932. <sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> "The Irish Times." 11 November 1932.

<sup>45</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Report from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice titled. '*Sale of Flanders Poppies*'. 21 September 1932.

These ceremonies have always been a source of much concern to the police owing to the possibility of grave disturbances arising in connection with them. The parades and poppy sales are held in all the more important towns of the State and the protection of poppy depots - day and night - the protection of those selling the poppies and the maintenance of order at the parades are a very serious strain on police resources.

The carrying of the Union Jack in the parades, its display from houses en route and the flourishing of this emblem as a badge and as a wrapper on the collection boxes are considered provocative conduct on the part of their followers. There is no doubt that many of the latter take advantage of such occasions to display anti-Irish and pro-British sentiments. It is this objectionable aspect of the proceedings that appeals to them rather than any genuine commemoration service for the dead.

If the sale of poppies and parades are to be permitted at all on this occasion, I would recommend:

1. The Parade should take the form of a procession and no recognised military words of command - nor anything in the nature of a military display should be allowed.
2. The Garda should not permit Union Jacks to be carried in the processions nor to be displayed going to or returning from the procession - on the grounds that such display is likely to lead to a breach of the peace.
3. The Permits for the sale of Flanders poppies should only be given on condition that the sellers do not wear Union Jacks as badges or use them as wrappers for or exhibit them on collection boxes.
4. That no general permission for parades or for the sale of poppies be given. Each Chief Superintendent to use his own discretion in his own area having regard to his local knowledge as to the possibility of disturbance and his ability to render adequate protection with the forces at his disposal.

Where a Chief Superintendent gives permission and subsequently learns that there is a danger of disorder, he should be in a position to withdraw such permission at any time.

5. The sale of Flanders poppies should be limited to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and the preceding day. Usually permission is sought for the previous and following Sundays.

Signed. Eoin Ua Dubhthaigh. Coimisineir.

(Eoin O'Duffy. Commissioner)

As a postscript to this document, O'Duffy stated the following reasons why he considered the commemorations to be Imperialistic and not in the true spirit of remembrance.

1. The very definite tendency of the majority of the processionists to adhere unnecessarily closely to military formation. The excessive use of military commands.
2. The indiscriminate display of the Union Jacks by the processionists and participants generally. The flying of Union Jacks from buildings along the processional routes and elsewhere in the city. The waving of Union Jacks by spectators along the processional route. The offenders in this respect are almost exclusively young girls and not infrequently it happened that the flags were flaunted, unintentionally perhaps, but never the less provocatively in the faces of citizens passing by in the course of their business.
3. A further feature of the ceremonies which was quite unnecessary to their purpose, was the collection each year of a number of people at College Green ostensibly to observe the 'Two minutes silence', but who immediately afterwards indulged in 'community singing' of the English National Anthem.

As usual, when the 11 November passed, the issue of the Armistice commemorations for both the Gardai and the Government was put on the long finger until the following year of 1933. By that time however, De Valera had called a surprise general election in January 1933 hoping to secure an overall Fianna Fail majority in the Dail, which in fact he did manage to achieve. After the election, the victorious De Valera requested the resignation of O'Duffy who refused to do so but eventually stepped down in a blaze of publicity. He was replaced by De Valera's own man, Ned Broy. O' Duffy went on to lead the rightwing Irish Nationalist organisation the National Guard more commonly known as The Blue Shirts, whose membership was limited to people who were Irish or whose parents profess the Christian faith.

Broy's approach to the yearly problem of disorder at Armistice parades was quite different from his predecessor. As far as Broy was concerned, there should be no parades at all. As became the custom, the RBL in Dublin, represented by Major Tynan, wrote to the Garda Commissioner's Office requesting permission to hold a parade in Dublin to the Phoenix Park on 11 November and for permission to sell poppies. In a letter dated the 18 October 1933 to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, Commissioner Broy proposed that British Legion church parades to and from church should 'not be permitted.' His reason for this recommendation was that any such parades were likely to lead to 'breaches of the peace.' He went on to say, 'While there can be no objection to church services' and the sale of poppies, he believed that if his recommendations were enforced, no 'serious trouble would ensue and the Gardai would be able to cope with anything that might arise.' His feelings on the parade to the Phoenix Park were the same, i.e. that it should not take place on the grounds of public safety. He put the ball firmly into the politician's court and requested an urgent decision.<sup>46</sup>

The next day, the Secretary of the Dept. of Justice, Domhnall De Brun, summarised the Garda Commissioner's recommendations in a letter to the Secretary, Dept. of the President of the Executive. Pass the parcel was played. De Brun basically passed the decision on to the Government as to whether the parades should go ahead or not. However, in his summary he noted that:<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Letter from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice. 18 of October 1933.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to the Secretary Dept. of the President of the Executive. 19 October 1933.

While due consideration must be given to the views of the Commissioner, this Department (Dept of Justice) is slow to arrive at a decision which might give offence to the large body of ex-Servicemen in this country and the Department is of the opinion that permission should be granted for the Church parades, the march of the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and the two minutes silence in the Phoenix Park. If such permission is granted, it will be necessary to afford adequate protection throughout the country for the purpose of preventing possible breaches of the peace.

The Executive Council led by the leader of Fianna Fail, Eamon De Valera, met on 24 October 1933 and made the following decision on RBL parades and the sale of Flanders poppies in the Irish Free State.

- a) That the Church parades proposed for the 5<sup>th</sup> of November should be permitted.
  
- b) That the proposed march to the Phoenix Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November should be allowed on the following conditions.
  1. That it should be from Beresford Place.
  2. That after the ceremony in the Park, the participants should disperse in accordance with arrangements made by the police with the organisers.
  3. That the wearing of British Fascist uniforms should not be allowed.
  4. That no Union Jacks should be displayed.
  
- c) That in general the sale of poppies should be permitted, subject however to restrictions by the police in certain areas.

The next day, the Minister for Justice informed the Commissioner about the Government's decision and that was the end of the matter. Other than the return parade from the Phoenix Park, as far as the British Legion was concerned, nothing much had changed. They were happy enough with the new arrangements that suited all the parties concerned.

In an open letter to *The Irish Times* dated 27 October 1933, the area Chairman of the RBL in Dublin, Mr. A. P. Connolly, wrote informing his members that they were very much aware of the Government's difficulties and instructed members of the Legion to do nothing that 'could be construed as provocative.'<sup>48</sup> Even 'The League Against Imperialism' people were happy; the Union Jacks were not to be seen. No reference was made to the Government's conditions to the singing of 'God Save the King', a practice that in fact carried on for many years after 1933.

The file in the Irish National Archives in Dublin which contains this interesting insight into the Irish Government's handling of the Armistice Day parades and the sale of Flanders poppies between the years 1928 - 1936 contains one final interesting document. It is a letter from one J Mac Raghnaill, Runai., (Hon. Secretary), The Association of Old IRA, 52 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 2. The letter is dated the 6 November 1936 and is addressed to President of the Executive, Mr. Eamon De Valera, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin. It is a well-written letter, the essence of which is the Old IRA's disgust at the yearly display of British Imperialism at the Dublin Horse Show and on the streets of the capital of Ireland during the Armistice weekend. The singing of the British National Anthem at Armistice commemorations was an insult to the 'dead who died in the National struggle and an insult to the vast majority of their countrymen by insolent ruthless contempt of their traditions, right, faith and National independence.' Mr Mac Raghnaill was dismayed that De Valera's government gave sanction to such open displays of Imperialism and actually afforded the protection of 'State Forces to those who spurn the Nation, whilst the young men loyal to Ireland, stung into violent resentment, are apprehended as a menace to the public peace.' In concluding his letter, Mr. Raghnaill made a recommendation to Mr. De Valera that had a very disturbing sting in the tail.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> *The Irish Times*. 27 October 1933.

<sup>49</sup> The National Archives. File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Mr. J Mac Raghnaill, Secretary Old IRA to Mr Eamon De Valera. 6 November 1936.

We would recommend that in future no permit be granted for the holding of Armistice Day demonstrations or suchlike provocative displays, otherwise the National Executive (Old IRA) must disclaim responsibility for any preventive that may eventuate because of the continuance of these demonstrations.

The letter was an attempt by the IRA to test how loyal the new Government was to 'Republican policy and loyalty to the Nation.'<sup>50</sup> Clipped onto Mr. Raghnaill's letter was a note from the Secretary, Dept. of the President to the Secretary, Dept. of Justice. Referring to Mr. Raghnaill's letter, De Valera's secretary wrote, 'The letter has been acknowledged and it is not proposed to send any further reply.'<sup>51</sup> The parades issue was over for another year.

---

<sup>50</sup> "The National Archives." File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Mr. J Mac Raghnaill, Secretary Old IRA to Mr Eamon De Valera. 6 November 1936.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of the President of the Executive to the Secretary Dept. of Justice 18 November 1936.



## In conclusion

The years between 1924 and 1936 marked the high water mark of commemoration of the First World War in the Republic of Ireland. After 1936, attendances at remembrance services declined. The main challenges the Irish government faced each year during the remembrance periods arose mainly from civil disorder in Dublin. Anti-treaty republicans used the annual remembrance commemorations to protest against the display of British imperialism and remind the Cosgrave government that they, the Irregulars, had not gone away. There is no doubt there were elements within the RBL in the Irish Free State who took advantage of the Irish administration's liberal attitude to war commemorations and perhaps remind the administration that they too had not gone away. To say the least, it was discourteous and disrespectful of the RBL to do so. Confronted with these annual militaristic remembrance parades and counter-demonstrations by Irregulars, while cognisant of their responsibility to retain law and order on the streets of Dublin, the Irish administration's response to these yearly challenges was tolerant and reasonable. Parades were allowed to continue, but not-unreasonably, were toned down in their militaristic nature. The sale of poppies continued, so too did the singing of God Save the King at remembrance services. However, again not unreasonably requested by the authorities, the flying of the Union Jack was restricted. It would seem there was a learning process that took place during the period between those who still believed they could continue on with their old habits such as the flying of the Union flag at will, and, the new emerging Irish state trying to create its own identity at home and abroad. That learning process resulted in compromise accepted by all involved other than the IRA. Despite the hard line on RBL remembrance events taken by De Valera's Garda Commissioner Ned Broy and the challenges De Valera faced from the IRA, that spirit of compromise and toleration towards First World War commemoration events continued on with the change of administrations from Cosgrave to De Valera. However by 1936, there were more important issues that confronted Mr De Valera and his government than the parade of Irish veterans of the First World War through the streets of Dublin.

## **Bibliography**

### **Primary Sources**

#### **Archive**

The National Archives of Ireland, Dublin

Department of Justice Files. Reference JUS8/64.

### **Secondary Sources**

#### **Press**

The Irish Independent

The Irish Times

#### **Books**

Ashplant, T.G; Dawson, Graham;Roper,Michael, ed. *The Politics of War and Memory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Collins, M E. *An Outline of Modern Irish History 1850-1966*. Dublin: The Educational Company, 1974.

Evans, Martin and Lunn, Ken, ed. *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Berg, 1997.

Fanning, Ronan;Kennedy, Michael;Keogh,Dermot;O' Halpin,Eunan, ed. *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Volume 3: 1926-1932*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2002.

Fitzpatrick, David. *Ireland and the First World War*. Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986.

Horne, John. *Our War*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008.

Horne, John and Madigan, Edward, ed. *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912-1923*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013.

Hunt, Michael. *Memory. War and Trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Leonard, Jane. *The Culture of War Commemoration*. Dublin: Cultures of Ireland, 1996.

McCarthy, John P. *Kevin O' Higgins Builder of the Irish State*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006.

Myers, Jason. *The Great War and Memory in Irish Culture 1918-2010*. Palo Alto, California: Academica Press, LLC, 2013.

Quinn, Anthony. *Wigs and Guns: Irish Barristers of the Great War*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006.

Quinn, T. *The Traumatic Memory of the Great War, 1914-1918, in Louis-Ferdinand Celine's Voyage Au Bout De La Nuit*. Ceredigion, Wales: The Ewin Mellen Press, 2005.

Switzer, Catherine. *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914-1939*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007.

Winter, Jay and Sivan, Emmanuel, ed. *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

### **Book Sections**

Canavan, Tony. "The Poppy My Father Wore: The Problems Facing Irish Nationalists in Commemorating the Two World Wars." In *Commemorating Ireland- History, Politics, Culture*, edited by Eberhard Bort. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004.

Fitzpatrick, David. "Commemoration in the Irish Free State: A Chronicle of Embarrassment." In *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Fitzpatrick, David. "Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts, 1912-1923." In *Towards Commemoration*, edited by John Horne and Edward Madigan. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013.

Leonard, Jane. "The Twinge of Memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919." In *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture*, edited by Richard English and Graham Walker. Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.

Leonard, Jane. "Facing 'the Finger of Scorn': Veterans' Memories of Ireland after the Great War." In *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Geoff Eley. Oxford: Berg, 1997.

Sherry, Ruth. "The Uses of the National Anthem." In *Ireland: Towards New Identities ?*, edited by Karl-Heinz Westrap and Michael Boss. Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1998.

### **Journal Published Article**

Burke, Tom. "Contentious Parades and Remembrance Days in Dublin 1928-1936." *The Blue Cap, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association* 11, (2004).

Pennell, Catriona. "Popular History and Myth-Making: The Role and Responsibility of First World War Historians in the Centenary Commemorations 2014-2018." *Historically Speaking* 13, no. 5 (5 November,2012).

Robinson, Helen. "Remembering War in the Midst of Conflict: First World War Commemorations in the Northern Irish Troubles." *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 1 (2010).

### **Websites**

"[Http://Www.Cwgc.Org](http://www.cwgc.org) the Commonwealth War Graves Commission", The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (2013).